

Facilitator Competencies – Summary Sheet

1. The facilitator creates the conditions for learning.

- i. Sets tone for trust and honesty
- ii. Establishes and maintains clear norms and routines
- iii. Sets and conveys clear objectives and expectations
- iv. Engages the intellectual and the emotional
- v. Sets tone for and creates structures for authentic feedback
- vi. Uses humor
- vii. Language and behaviors reflect asset-based view and fundamental belief in human potential
- viii. Demonstrates congruence between values, content, and teaching/facilitation method
- ix. Feedback is about behavior and performance, not personal character
- x. Models behaviors expected to see i.e.:
 1. Taking experiential work seriously
 2. Really listening; responding to affect and message as well as content
 3. Allowing oneself to be vulnerable; admitting and learning from mistakes
 4. Sharing one's own learning experiences and being transparent about the purpose

2. The facilitator cultivates independence and interdependence.

- i. Demonstrates comfort with being coach and learner, not expert
- ii. Supports participants in constructing their own knowledge, individually and collaboratively
- iii. Problematizes rather than simplifies
- iv. Draws out participants' expertise; leverages learning from within participants
- v. Provides opportunities for participants to give each other feedback
- vi. Provides opportunities for self-assessment
- vii. Uses one's authority in the service of pushing learning

3. The facilitator makes strategic interventions.

- i. Is able to read and diagnose the environment including attending and responding to
 1. language
 2. silences
 3. body language
 4. one's own feelings
- ii. Lesson plans and interventions are based on informal and formal assessments

- iii. Lesson plans and interventions are structured to help participants move toward developing the specific competencies on which they are assessed
- iv. Able to adjust lesson plans and interventions in response to what's in the room
- v. Capitalizes on teachable moments; times interventions to make the most of the very moment when something can be learned in a deeply personal way
- vi. Hones improvisational skills, including moving in and out of various roles and shifting direction mid-course

4. The facilitator pushes the thinking, not the thought.

- i. Provides opportunities for experiential learning experiences, specifically those that challenge participants:
 - 1. to recognize cognitive dissonance
 - 2. to consider and reconsider what they already know
 - 3. to learn what they might already know more deeply
 - 4. to make connections between theory and practice
- ii. Problematizes, rather than simplifies, uncovers and tolerates complexity and/or ambiguity
- iii. Asks authentic questions that:
 - 1. challenge participants within their zone of proximal development
 - 2. demonstrate genuine curiosity
 - 3. are open to a range of answers
 - 4. scaffold learning yet do not have a ceiling; are open to the possibility that participants might answer in surprising ways, perhaps even by reframing the question itself
- iv. Creates adequate time for regular debriefing
- v. Balances openness with clear accountability

5. The facilitator attends to the needs and interrelationships of different levels of the system: the individual, the small group, and the group as a whole.

- i. Allocates his or her time to balance competing needs of individuals and small groups
- ii. Values systems thinking and interrelatedness of individual and group learning
- iii. Works to ensure democratic processes in large group discussion, helping to ensure that certain voices do not dominate and that all voices can be heard
- iv. Circulates during team time and group discussion
- v. Transitions effectively between large and small group conversations
- vi. Demonstrates knowledge of group and system dynamics
- vii. Encourages reflection on group process in order to raise individual and group knowledge about group and system dynamics

6. The facilitator provokes and contains anxiety.

- i. Establishes and maintains boundaries, physical and emotional
- ii. Willing to push learning even when it causes anxiety and discomfort
- iii. Knows when not to push—when anxiety becomes too great for learning to occur
- iv. Demonstrates self-awareness and the ability to use one's feelings as a barometer of what might be going on in the room and to target interventions accordingly; in other words, the facilitator demonstrates the ability:
 - 1. to recognize one's own emotions as a potential source of information about what is going on in the room
 - 2. to make an educated best hypothesis as to the meaning of those feelings—where they are coming from and what they might mean
 - 3. To select and implement a behavioral intervention based on one's hypothesis of what the feelings might mean and how best to respond in order to help participants learn
- v. Demonstrates awareness of others
- vi. Avoids both impulsive reaction and inaction

7. The facilitator maintains purpose and focus.

- i. Articulates clear learning objectives; makes them explicit and supports them strategically
- ii. Activities, statements, behaviors are purposeful, including placement of one's body or furniture
- iii. Stays focused despite distractions
- iv. Reminds, repeats, reinforces
- v. Interrupts and refocuses unproductive conversations
- vi. Demonstrates awareness of larger purpose: to prepare future principals
- vii. Gives targeted, honest, timely feedback
- viii. Holds participants accountable to performance standards at every level and recommends dismissal when standards are not met